

## **Gov's Proposed Community Facility Program**

### **Purpose:**

Economic development in Wyoming requires a balanced and long-range view of enhancing both business opportunity in a community as well as the quality of life offered by the community.

Community facilities play an important role in the attractiveness of a community.

This program is designed to assist local communities in working with other local governmental units to develop community facilities which improve the attractiveness of the community for economic development and as a place to live.

### **Conceptual framework:**

- The State will provide financial assistance to qualifying communities with a demonstrated need for development of “community facilities.”
- Initially, these community facilities will emphasize:
  - space for community gatherings and functions;
  - appropriate physical and athletic facilities for community members, in particular, youth;
  - appropriate swimming facilities for community members and youth.
- To become a “qualifying” community, the following will be required, at a minimum:
  - A demonstrated, long-term, local commitment to maintenance of the facility;
  - An agreed upon partnership with other local governmental entities to ensure the long-term viability of the facility
- To present a “demonstrated need” for state assistance, the following will be required, at a minimum:

- The facilities are not otherwise already being provided in the community; or the facilities exist, but the financing has not yet been fully paid;
- The community can demonstrate genuine need for the facility;
- The facility can be demonstrably related to a long-term plan for economic development or quality of life in the community.

### **Funding:**

- Coal lease bonuses accrue to the school capital construction account by statute. These bonuses appear to be coming in at rates higher than budgeted. One-half of the excess revenue above the budgeted amount (which was approximately \$.35/ton) should be set aside for cost escalation in school capital construction and increased needs in school district 5-year plans. The remaining one-half of the excess revenue over that budgeted should be set aside to fund this community facilities program. No new taxes, and no reduction in funds to any other entity will occur.

### **Key components and issues:**

- Operate the program through an existing structure, e.g.: Business Council or SLIB.
- Rules and regs will be drafted to carefully delineate the limitations of the program.
- No state money will flow without a long-term “partnered” commitment at the local level with other governmental units to maintain the facility.
- These facilities may be used by and with local school districts, but these facilities are not being provided as part of the State’s delivery of an “adequate” education for children.
- Funding will be available for new projects, for expansion of existing facilities, and for purchase of ownership interests in “enhanced” school facilities paid for at the local level since the inception of the School Facilities Commission.
- Preference will be given to construction of facilities in communities

with a demonstrated need for the facility.

- The program will operate on a grant basis, developed on approval of projects as submitted.
- Template projects may, and probably should, be developed by the State as examples of what is available and being contemplated. This is not to stifle local creativity, but to illustrate the intent of the program.